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12.

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A NARROW ESCAPE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DENIS DOWNE," "NO ALTERNATIVE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XIV. GENTLE WORDS!

"SOME days must be dark and dreary," we are told on the incontrovertible authority of Longfellow, but he wouldn't have rhymed about the fact so resignedly if he had tried a few such days with May," Frank Forest says to himself, one morning, when he finds himself sitting alone with his betrothed.

A light drizzling rain is falling, the sun is not making the faintest effort to appear, and altogether there is that uncomfortable unseasonableness in the atmosphere, which surely depresses the man, woman, or child who is compelled to pass the hours in idleness. Unhappily for himself, Frank has been betrayed into pledging himself so to pass them. It is the day after his return from Dunster, and in brave but blind obedience to the dictates of duty, he has put himself into the power of May at a comparatively early hour of the day.

A sense of her wrongs is paramount in May's mind, and to the best of her ability she is making it very manifest in her manner. Unfortunately for her, she has no definite accusation to bring against her recreant lover. He has been away from her nearly a month, but he avows that he has been away on family business, and she cannot gainsay him. During his absence he has written to her regularly—that is to say, he has always answered her letters, and though his epistles have not been charged with ardent expressions of affection, they have been sensible and kind—a little too sensible, perhaps. Lastly, he has come to see her shortly after his return,

not in indecorous haste, certainly, but soon enough to show that he is her own property still, and that he has not fallen a prey to the wiles of that "artful girl."

In spite of her inability to frame a strong act of accusation against him, May expresses her resentment in every look and gesture. Nevertheless, full of resentment as she is, she claims her pound of flesh, and will have him engage himself to sit with her this morning, to drive with her mother and herself in the afternoon, and to dine with them at night. Crushed and tamed by a consciousness of the decrepit way in which he has broken down, Frank yields a meek assent to these plans, and sits with her, his heart heavy, his mind empty, and his "brain softening," he almost fancies, from a prolonged contemplation of May's white expressionless hands, as they move about listlessly, engaged in the production of some new lace stitches.

It is no part of Miss Constable's scheme to try and beguile the time for him. He has erred in her estimation, and he must be punished by a show of her displeasure. As the captive of her bow and spear he shall remain close to her, but she feels vaguely that it is only just to let him see that she doesn't want his society.

Frank has tried many topics in turns, and each one has turned to ashes on his lips, by reason of the terseness—not to say snappish conciseness—of May's rejoinders. He has spoken of his work and his sisters, and his friend Bellairs, and to all of these subjects May has shown indifference. He has maligned the weather and the daily papers, and "everything" that is "going on," and May has consistently professed herself pleased and satisfied with them all. He has even for the sake

of the experiment attempted to caress May into a milder mood, and May has pettishly repulsed his not very ardent demonstration. Under these circumstances it is not wonderful that he should feel considerably depressed, by the knowledge that he has to spend nearly the whole of the day in her society.

After a silence that has lasted about three minutes, May looks up at him with a heightened colour, and a slight waving of the head that betokens anger, and says,

"You must have been a pleasant companion for your uncle and cousin, if you entertained them by your conversation as brilliantly as you are entertaining me this morning."

The idea of May being "entertained" by any conversation, however brilliant, tickles him considerably, consequently, he further annoys his already outraged liege lady, by laughing, as he replies,

"You won't throw the ball back, May; it's too much trouble for me to run after it each time."

"Too much trouble to exert yourself the least bit in the world for my entertainment; oh! Frank! what a prospect for us; when we are married we shall probably have to spend many, many such days as this —"

"Heaven forbid!" he interrupts. "My dear child, why conjure up such an appalling possibility? There is always the chance of a wet day certainly, but you can't often be so thoroughly out of gear as you are to-day."

"You mean that I am exacting and ill-tempered?" she asks in a subdued, but very visible fury.

"I mean that you are exacting—all nice women are," he says, hurriedly, hoping to avert the storm, "every lady would be queen for life, you know."

"You meant more than that, because that wouldn't be being 'out of gear' in your estimation," she says, her voice getting shriller with each word she utters. "It's all very well for you to try and make it smooth with me, by repeating, parrot-like, a compliment that you have probably often addressed to your cousin: but I'm not so easily deceived as you seem to think, Frank, and I am not so entirely dependent on you for affection and attention, as you seem to suppose."

She pauses, out of breath, with indignation and jealousy, and Frank more than

ever dislikes the prospect of connubial bliss that is opening before him, as he looks at her.

"I never supposed that you were dependent on me entirely for affection and attention, May," he says, softly, for he is a very good-natured fellow, and he really pities the girl for the pangs he unavoidably inflicts upon her. Mentally, he adds, "It would be a bad look-out for you if you were, poor little thing, for I have very little of either to bestow upon you."

"I am sure I never did a single thing to try and make you propose to me," May goes on tearfully, "and why you did it I can't tell, for you're showing plainly enough that you don't want me now; I wish you'd say what you do want, and make an end of it."

She winds up her sentence with a jerk. She is evidently in the very worst and weakest stage of feminine fury, and Frank sees how unbecoming it all is, although he cannot blind himself to the fact of its having some foundation.

"I think the less one wrangles the better," he says, trying to speak calmly; "hard words break no bones, the old saw tells us, but they live in the memory, and they're not pleasant companions. I don't want to be tempted into saying anything impatient or rude to you, May, dear. I should resent it on myself, for your sake by-and-by, if I could ever forget myself so far—be a little lenient, a little patient with me."

He makes his request in good faith, apparently. Though, as a student of human nature, he must have a perception of the fact that love has as little to do with leniency as passion has with either patience or prudence.

"I think mamma and you had better have a talk," the girl says, speaking almost hysterically in her futile rage; "it's dreadful to me to have to say things to a person who doesn't feel what I say a bit—"

"My dear May," he interrupts, philosophically and hopefully, "why, if you feel that, why say them? Believe me, I should be happier if you never uttered hard words to me, and I am sure that you would be better pleased with yourself if you could maintain a golden silence; all this comes to nothing."

He does not mean to goad the girl, he only wants to air his vain, selfish theory of keeping the bloom on his own life while he may. He is one of the apostles of the creed which declares that it is right and

well to give the greatest happiness to the greatest number. The "individual" may suffer! That is nothing to Frank Forest; he wishes to avert pain and confusion from the families of Forest and Constable, and—from himself. May will possibly be teased, and Kate probably tortured to death; but—what matter? Appearances will be preserved, and his own path smoothed.

"All this comes to nothing," she echoes, rising up and throwing off the semblance of being industrious and engrossed with her lace-work; "how painfully true! You have no more feeling for what I suffer than if you were a block of ice. I would rather never see you again than go on as I have gone on for the last month or two; my life has been a misery to me ever since your cousin came up."

"Do leave my cousin out of the question," he says, as she pauses to wipe away her fast-falling tears. "My poor cousin has no great reason to bless the day she came among us," he adds softly.

"Then you have been making love to her," May cries; "your own words condemn you, Frank, and justify me in all I have said. It's mean of you as well as cruel to go on keeping up appearances with me while you're lavishing your love on her; what shall I gain by being your wife to compensate me for the knowledge I have now that you don't care for me, that you only care for—"

"Don't say that," he says, sternly; "don't soil your lips by the utterance of an insult that I could never forgive; you must think badly of me, indeed, if you think that it's only your money I want," he goes on in a contradictory spirit, wording the very accusation against himself which he had entreated her not to make.

"I thought we were going to have such a happy long day together," May sobs, supinely, in response; "and it's turning out so miserable, and I can't help it."

"You broached the disagreeable topic," he says, and he doesn't attempt to dry her tears.

"O, Frank, how could I help it; I can't let things go on as they—are—going; it wouldn't be just to myself to let myself be treated as if I were a nonentity. You *must* speak to mamma; I won't go on in this way."

He drives her nearly mad at this juncture by casting himself back in his chair in serio-comic dismay.

"Only tell me what way you want to go on in, and it shall be so," he laughs out. "I'm prepared for anything, the best or the worst; you'll find me most acquiescent, May, only—make up your mind as to what you want before you begin."

"Oh! I will call mamma," May says, in a voice that is broken by a sob of very genuine and justifiable anger, and with this she goes out of the room, with tears rolling down her cheeks.

Presently Mrs. Constable advances to the attack, quite after the manner of a mother on the stage. That is to say she chatters volubly as she comes through the hall to some person or persons unseen, and her voice is raised to a very high pitch, indeed, as she enters the room. Frank feels at once that his interview with May has been child's-play compared to that which is to come with May's mother.

"This is most painful, Frank," she commences, the instant she gets into the room. "I have always said that I never would interfere between my children and their husbands and wives, but—"

"I not being May's husband yet, you think you may interfere between us," he laughs out. "My dear Mrs. Constable, this is a mere tempest in a tea-cup; May has created an ideal wrong and is worrying herself about it; but I can assure you that she must be convinced presently that she has no just cause for annoyance."

("No just cause that she knows of, poor little thing,") he has the grace to add this clause mentally.

"I don't know about that," Mrs. Constable replies; "it's all very well for you to come back to May now and take everything for granted as if you had never gone away, and never even condescended to explain why you went away; but May's proper pride is hurt as well as her feelings. I'm thankful to say that no child of mine is deficient in proper pride. She has no desire to thrust herself upon you; but really while you retain her promise and keep up the pretence of being engaged to her, things must be different. I cannot see my child suffer."

Frank's manly spirit revolts at all this, and his manly brain whirls round as he contemplates the abyss of servitude into which they are striving to drag him.

"May brings all her sufferings on herself," he says, coolly, "I am not responsible for the imaginary foes to her peace whom she conjures up, and I am no Don

Quixote, to go out and do battle against windmills. If May—or you for her—are not satisfied with my line of conduct, we had better fairly understand each other, and bring the affair to a conclusion."

"Do you mean, break off the engagement!" Mrs. Constable cries, lifting her hands up in horror. "No, no, Mr. Forest; I have put up with much from you, but if the engagement is to be broken off, it must be my child who does it. Do you know what you are under-rating, and throwing aside? Why, May, with her beauty and her wealth, might, as her uncle says, and indeed all her friends say, command a coronet."

Frank suppresses a groan, he also suppresses the words, "Let her command it forthwith, and give me my order of release," and aloud he says,

"Don't mistake me, Mrs. Constable; it rests entirely with May; I shall never desire to break my engagement with May; whatever I may be, I am a fellow who keeps his word, and holds a promise to be a very sacred thing."

He says all this in absolute sincerity. He means it all as thoroughly at the time, as if he had not been on the brink of breaking his promise a dozen times. In fact, Frank's theories are admirable, and he has a habit of airing them, in a way that deludes himself into the belief that he puts them into practice frequently.

"I am sure I don't know what to do," Mrs. Constable says, in perplexity.

"You're not called upon to do anything," he says, cheerily, in the vain belief that the stream of talk is arrested in its flow, and that there is nothing more disagreeable going to be said.

"But I don't know what to advise," the harassed mother continues; "it's all very well for you to be cool and indifferent about it, but if you were May's mother, you would feel very differently, very differently indeed. When I see that dear girl wretched about some trouble that I can't remove from her, do you think it unnatural that I should speak to you, and blame you too, Frank? Though I'm as fond of you as if you were my son already, and I'm sure a break would be a very terrible thing to us all."

She stops, overcome by emotion, and Frank feels painfully low, and quite as if he were united in holy matrimony to the whole family already. Before he can

frame a fitting reply to the half prayer, half condemnation, which Mrs. Constable has worded, the door is opened impetuously, and the married sister, Mrs. Grange, is in their midst.

Mrs. Grange has immense natural advantages on her side in every contest into which she ventures against the male sex. She is gifted with commanding height, a shrill voice, and a cuttingly distinct articulation. She can talk down any human being who opposes her, and this without saying anything very particular, or to the point that may be in question. Under all circumstances she loves to direct the storm, and if there is no special storm to direct, she loves to create one. She feels now that she has come in most opportunely, and charges straight at her victim in a gallant way, that makes her mother blink with admiration for her daughter's prowess.

"Well, Frank," she commences, sweeping her draperies around and about him, in an aggressive manner. "I can only tell you, that if you had me to deal with, instead of May, you would find a great difference: she has told me a word—only a word, for I must say May is getting most abominably close, mamma—and I must ask you, if you imagine for a moment that her family can permit this sort of thing to go on; if I were in May's place, instead of crying my eyes out as she is doing now, I should bid you go back to your cousin, about whom I have just heard some very strange things!"

CHAPTER XV. COMPLICATED.

THE little impromptu supper of last night, at which not one of the three could say anything in secret to another, has paved the way to a friendly and apparently easy and pleasant intercourse between the trio who find themselves together unpremeditatedly at Lynmouth. The two ladies do not evince the faintest surprise, when Bellairs calls in this morning, before they have finished breakfast, to ask them if they will go with him to the darkly, sweetly, solitary haunt of the red deer, immortalised now by the clever author who has vitalised the old robber story, and made "the Doon," a household name in the land.

In truth, he is delighted to see the friendship and intimacy which seems to exist between these two women. He knows a goodly portion of the sad truth concerning poor Mrs. Angerstein. He is

ready and willing to make Kate Mervyn his wife to-morrow if only he can win her. At the same time, he does not shrink from the thought of the comradeship which has sprung up between the two, but is, on the contrary, desirous of advancing it in any way that he possibly can without seeming effusive. For he knows that while Cissy can never possibly do Kate any harm, Kate will probably do Cissy the great good of restoring the latter's confidence in the heaven-born tenderness of her fellow-creatures.

That he gets a little misunderstood by one of these women is only natural. Kate, the better and brighter of the two as she is, is the one who falls prone and helpless into the deepest error. "He wants to show me that I am nothing more to him than she is—that I take rank in his memory merely as a girl whose foolish passion was a pastime to him while it lasted, and to which he is contemptuously tolerant now, as he looks back upon it. He thinks we're a pair of fools, I'm sure—for probably her worst offence is, that she loved him too, and let him know it."

Nevertheless, though Kate thinks all these, and many other hard and uncomfortable things, she accepts the situation of being on apparently friendly terms with him again very readily and gracefully. "Perhaps, if he can be made to quite realize that I am heartily repentant of that by-gone folly, and that I blame myself for it all, much more than I blame him, he will understand me better, and go out of my way, instead of staying here to patronise me, as he would never attempt to patronise a woman who hadn't shown herself weak on his account once;" she tells herself in the fervour of her intense belief in its being a fact that a man is more lenient to, and has a larger meed of forgiveness for, every fault and folly that can be committed by a woman, than this one—that she should love himself without his having given her (what he deems to be) sufficient cause.

They drive over to the banks of the river that runs through the heart of the Doon valley, and fish, and read away the sunny hours of one of the hottest days of the year. As the three keep together, sagaciously, the whole time, there is no opportunity for private communication between Kate and her old lover; consequently, there is no occasion for jealousy tearing Mrs. Angerstein's heart to pieces. A soft, lulling sense of rest steals over her,

as she finds herself once more by the side of the man who strove to serve her so wisely and well in the old days; and, out of consideration for him, she tries hard to think and speak freely and affectionately of her husband, and of the probability of his joining them to-night.

"It's been rather hard on him, poor fellow, for the last fortnight," she says. "It's his greatest relaxation, when he comes in from his rounds, to play with his children, and I have been heartless enough not only to come away myself, but to bring the children with me. In every letter he tells me how wretched he is without us; that's a good tribute, isn't it, after being married seven years?"

"If you were my wife, Cissy, and I felt wretched without you, I should insist on your going home without delay," Captain Bellairs, says, in utter unconsciousness of the storm of feeling the bare suggestion creates in Mrs. Angerstein's breast. For one weak, unguarded moment she looks at him with her heart in her eyes; and he, happening to glance up at that moment, meets the look, and would be more or less than man, if he did not read it aright.

The knowledge comes upon him with humbling, shocking force. In all his experience of Cissy, he has never surmised or feared anything so infinitely distressing to himself as this, that she should love him with a love so widely different to his fraternal feeling for her, that it must poison her happiness, and upset the peaceful balance of her life. He does not despise nor condemn the woman for the womanly weakness of having yielded to a feeling he has never sought to call into being. He does not feel elated at a conquest he has never striven to make. All he feels is profound pity and tenderness for the mistake she has made. "Poor little thing! I wouldn't have cost her this pain for the world," he thinks, pitifully, as her eyes droop before his. Then his eyes wander to Kate's observant face, and he feels sorrowfully that he must throw away another chance; that he must leave Kate before they understand each other, or, at any rate, before she understands him; for he knows that he is in honour bound to get out of Mrs. Angerstein's orbit as soon as possible.

The revelation, spasmodic and slight as it has been, is lasting and powerful in its sobering influence over the two whom it

concerns. The light, easily subdued spirit of the married woman is crushed within her, by the consciousness that this man must think as little of her as a wife as he has heretofore had reason to think of her as a woman. She is as penitential, as she sits there cowering before him, as if she had done him some underhand ill turn. "He feels that my love is a disgrace to him, and that I'm ungrateful to make him such a return after all his goodness to me," she thinks in her self-abasement, and he, all the while, is feeling such pity for her as he would not dare to allow himself to feel, if there was a possibility of the pity ever merging into anything warmer.

"We've come to the end of each other and ourselves," Kate says presently, as she finds herself becoming gradually infected by the depression of her companions, "and there's nothing left to eat or drink in the basket; and the coach will be in before we get back to Lynmouth; don't you think we had better start? Mr. Angerstein will bring down some news and fresh ideas—"

"And we shall not feel ashamed of resetting and transposing the limited stock of words in which we have been expressing our admiration for the beauties of the valley, and the invigorating nature of the breeze on the hills; altogether he will be a healthy element, let us go back and get him to mingle with us without delay."

Captain Bellairs tries to say all this, in a way that shall lead Mrs. Angerstein to believe that he supposes her to be full of pleasure at the idea of the anticipated arrival of her husband; and she understands his intention, and is grateful for it, but cannot, for the life of her, respond to, or back him up in, his endeavour.

"I shall feel so glad when he comes, on account of the children," she says, a little awkwardly, "they are thrown out of their usual routine, and are getting dreadfully unruly, aren't they, Kate? Mr. Angerstein will soon bring them into order again though."

"He has failed in bringing you completely into order, hasn't he, Cissy?" he says, in a jocular way, of which he repents him instantly, as she turns away after giving him an answer with her beseeching eyes, that her quivering lips refuse to utter. She has bared her wound before him so unintentionally that it does seem cruel on his part to ignore it utterly, and

to seem to speak in a sportive way as if she were sound and unhurt.

"I detest that kind of boneless talk about husbands bringing their wives into proper subjection," Kate puts in; "what creature is worth anything when it's cowed? A reasonable meed of consideration for his views, and a reasonable toleration for his sentiments, is all that any man requires from women at large; why should he require more from the woman who is his wife, and who, therefore, is compelled to hear more of them than any other person in the world?"

"Mr. Angerstein never requires blind obedience, and he is so perfectly reasonable that he will never argue with me when I'm angry," Cissy says, speaking under the feeble impression that it behoves her to say something in defence of her absent lord, who has never been attacked.

"There is so much vice in virtue as a rule," Kate goes on, pursuing her own views on the subject, without much regard for Mrs. Angerstein's interpollations; "there is so much selfishness in paring away our angles in order to fit ourselves more comfortably into our respective niches; to me there is no merit in making the best of it, unless it means making the best of it for others entirely, and not for ourselves at all."

"It certainly is a wife's duty to make the best of things for her husband," Mrs. Angerstein says, an uneasy feeling pervading her to the effect that she is being engulfed in a conversational stream, in which she will speedily be out of her depth.

"It is her inclination, if she loves him—and if she doesn't love him, it makes things smoother and pleasanter for herself in the long run," Kate replies, "love and expediency are the only two laws that are recognized in reality."

"If you really mean what you say, Kate, I shall pity the man who marries you," Mrs. Angerstein says; "if you don't happen to love him, a sense of duty will never make you a good wife."

"A sense of duty never made a woman a good wife yet; it may make her a capital housekeeper, and a pleasant companion (no, a sense of duty isn't what makes women pleasant companions though) and an excellent mother, and a perfect domestic machine altogether; it may make her a very comfortable woman to live with, but it will not make her what I understand by a 'good wife.'"

He tries to look into her eyes as she speaks, and make her understand how thoroughly he appreciates. All his thoughts are of her as she describes the woman she is not like, and all her thoughts are of Frank.

"You're right, Kate," he whispers, "it is love, and love only, that makes the perfect woman a combination of child and queen——"

"Of tyrant and slave, you mean," she interrupts; "good gracious! don't think that I'm weak enough not to know that there is a great deal more evil than good in it; but it's the only law that is obeyed for itself alone, with no hope of reward, and very often in defiance of the certain knowledge that we shall do ourselves most deadly damage, if we obey its dictates; I'm speaking about women, it never hurts men," she winds up, a little bitterly, as she reviews her own experiences, and sees that a sadder shadow than she has ever noticed there before, has settled down on the pretty, fair face of Mrs. Angerstein.

"You're anxious to get home, and meet your husband, are you not?" Kate says, considerably, "do drive faster, Captain Bellairs; we have been weakly theorizing while Mrs. Angerstein has been practically suffering from the pangs of impatience. I always paint mental pictures of what people are like, before I see them; Mr. Angerstein shall have a little portrait of himself, as I imagine him, to-morrow."

"My husband is a very good-looking man," Cissy says, with a feeble effort to infuse an accent of pride into her remark, "he's a very good man too; I hope you will like him, Harry," she adds, looking at him, timidly, and saying it more for the sake of calling him by his name, than with any other view.

"I'm tolerably certain to like any one who's fond of you, and of whom you're fond," he replies; and the reply is so eminently unsatisfactory to Mrs. Angerstein, that she has no words wherewith to carry on the conversation.

There is intense heat and weight in the air as the evening draws on. Torpor settles over everything, and the languid horse can hardly exert himself to whisk his tail with sufficient vigour to drive away the swarms of flies that are humming and buzzing about. Sheet lightning plays around, and glorifies the purple heather and yellow gorse with which wide surfaces on either

side are bejewelled. Thunder rumbles about morosely in the distance. Big clouds lower sullenly about, and, occasionally, drop heavy, passionate tears, that the scorching heat quickly dries up. Cows in the fields are too tired to stand up, and too hot to lie down, and too idiotic to understand that they make matters worse by herding together. The birds fly low, and the wild flowers hang their heads. The tempest is nearly upon them as they get to the bottom of the hill, and turn with a flagging air toward Mrs. Angerstein's lodgings.

It bursts out, peal after peal, flash after flash before they gain the door, and then their progress is delayed by a little terror-stricken crowd, which is surging about in a helpless way. Several faces in the crowd are turned up pityingly towards the dog-cart which Captain Bellairs is driving, and several voices say, "That's her; the little, light lady is the wife." There are a few wild questions asked, a few halting, commiserating answers given, and the cause of the crowd is made clear to Mrs. Angerstein. Her husband has slipped in getting off the coach at the top of a perilous hill, which he distrusted descending behind four horses, and the two near wheels have passed over his back. "As nice a gentleman as ever sat on that 'ere box-seat," the driver of the coach observes to any one who will listen to him. "Coach-driving ain't all sweets, I say, though there's few as have been on the road so long, as has had fewer accidents than I."

"By road or by sea, there's few of us women who are wives who don't know trouble by one or other on 'em," a gentle-faced woman, whose husband is a sailor, drawls out in the soft lingering accents of the west, and even as she is saying it her naturally low voice drops lower still, and a hush comes over the crowd, for Captain Bellairs comes out with the pallor of horror and sorrow on his face, and without words bids the crowd disperse itself.

They do it without a murmur, for the bright spirit of Hope has fled, and the dark spirit of suspense has vanished at the approach of the black king Death. It is all certainty now—as far as those who are left behind are concerned. The husband is dead, and the wife is a widow; and the friend who feels as a brother towards her is most horribly perplexed. For the landlady tells him—

"His only words after he was brought

into this house, sir, was of his lady and you; 'you'd see justice done to her, and take care of her; and he died happy, thinking he left her to you,' he said; her brother, sir, if I may make so bold?"

LIEUTENANT MUDGE'S AUNT.

A TALE OF ST. PATRICK'S BALL.

MR. MULLIGAN MUDGE is a lieutenant in that distinguished militia regiment, known in peaceful Hibernian circles as the Ringsend Fusileers. He is an officer of superior ability, and can screw a glass into his right eye, lounge upon an outside car, and walk up or down Grafton-street, in a manner at once calculated to attract attention, and to impress the vulgar mind with a due sense of his attainments, of his military achievements, and of his dignity. During the period in which his gallant regiment is under training, Lieutenant Mudge is a glory to behold, for he appears in the startling radiance of regimentals, with a huge sword dangling after him, causing a general clatter all over the street, to the awe and bewilderment of all honest rate-paying burghesses with whom he may come into contact.

Now Lieutenant Mudge, at the period of the opening of this narrative, was extremely desirous of improving his financial position, his resources being of that genteel nature known as "limited;" and as he had no profession but that of a second-hand warrior, and was unable to increase his income through the medium of the labour market, he, able strategist as he was, perceived at a glance that there were but two courses open to him by which he might attain, if not prosperity, at least an honourable independence. One of these roads to fortune lay through the lottery of marriage; the other through the life of an aunt, who possessed three thousand pounds in the simple elegance of the three per cents., in addition to a snug "bit o' land" in the neighbourhood of the town of Loughrea, upon which she resided, and whither the gallant Ringsend Fusileer was wont to repair after the dangers and glories of the annual training of the distinguished corps to which he was attached, in order to recruit his constitution and his pocket.

Mrs. Clancy was extremely proud of her warlike kinsman, and indulged the gallant lieutenant in anything, everything, but money. She sent him hampers of fowls, hams, and vegetables; she made him gifts

of cheap pocket-handkerchiefs, bought in job lots in Loughrea, of scarfs and brummagem pins. She even presented him with a suit of garments of the deceased Clancy, the small-clothes of which were constructed of corduroy, but she never gave him a coin. "Ye'll have it all after I'm gone, Tim," she would say, upon his earnest application for pecuniary aid, "but not a farden till then—not a mag, Tim." Even when she visited Dublin, the lieutenant's head-quarters, she would not entrust him with the payment of as much as a car fare; and so far did she carry out her views upon the subject of coinage control, that even the payment of the halfpenny, to cross the metal bridge over the River Liffey, was doled out by herself, and she detained the gallant Fusileer, upon a cutting day in January, for at least five minutes while she hunted down a coy sixpence, with numbed and nervous fingers.

Seeing that it was hopeless to endeavour to develop Mrs. Clancy's mineral resources, Lieutenant Mudge turned his thoughts in the direction of matrimony, and, before he had well decided on his line of action, destiny flung a charming girl across his path like a rose-bud.

Mrs. Bolgibbie, the mother of the maiden in question, was the relict of a counsel learned in the law, who had died of brain fever brought on by consuming the midnight oil over an impossible case, leaving Mrs. Bolgibbie disconsolate, with three hundred a year, and a daughter, the image of her defunct sire; especially about the nasal organ, which was very red and very bulbous. To this young creature (age uncertain), Lieutenant Mudge was formally presented at a little evening party, given by a mutual friend residing at Rathmines, and having danced with her as often as circumstances would permit, experienced the inexpressible satisfaction of escorting her and her engaging mother to their residence within the city boundary, and the unutterable chagrin of paying the cabman double fare; for it was past that hour at which the ordinary tariff fails to satisfy and far into that in which fancy prices reign supreme. But, had he not made an investment? Was not that half-crown, composed of two mouldy shillings, a fourpence, and four halfpence, destined to bear golden fruit? It had been confidentially imparted to him that Miss Bolgibbie was in possession of five hundred per annum, and this, too, at her own disposal. Here was a light towards which

to propel his rickety bark; here was a harbour of refuge, worthy the straining of every nerve to gain, and, once in whose smooth water, he could ride pleasantly at anchor, and calmly survey the bankrupt billows dashing harmlessly over the break-water standing between him and financial shipwreck! Mrs. Bolgibbie was possessed of genteel proclivities, Miss Bolgibbie went a step further and spoke of the aristocracy with that easy and familiar air with which people speak of matters of which they know very little, but of which they would fain know a great deal. Mrs. Bolgibbie had a relative in the army, to whom she constantly referred; but whether the gentleman adorned the British, French, Austrian, Russian, or Chinese service, no person could by any possibility determine, as when pressed upon the point the lady evaded a direct answer in a manner that reflected the highest credit upon her ingenuity, whilst, at the same time, it effectually closed the inquiry. Mrs. Bolgibbie lived within her means, and as a consequence did not throw much money away upon the modistes of Dublin. She indulged in the winter season in imitation seal-skin, and limp black silk with a bluish shine upon it, as though it had been polished with black-lead. In summer she affected a mysterious fabric consisting of a compromise between muslin and *barège*, very cheap, but singularly showy, and, indeed, glittering. Miss Bolgibbie dressed much after the fashion of her parent, and sported a quantity of bog oak ornaments gaily relieved by cunning and elaborate devices in cut steel.

Lieutenant Mudge sped in his wooing. He called repeatedly, and was received with a cordiality by Mamma, and a gushing coyness by Mademoiselle that promised well for his ultimate share in the fortunes of the house. The gallant Fusilier spared no pains to render himself agreeable, frequently volunteering to escort the ladies to places of entertainment where the entrance fee did not exceed one shilling; or to the theatres upon debenture orders; or to Kingstown pier; or for a promenade upon the Donnybrook Road. He presented Miss Bolgibbie with his photograph taken in full regimentals, and she in return blushing handed him her portrait, taken, injudiciously, in evening dress, a costume in which she displayed a larger quantity of collar-bone and a more uncompromising scragginess than are conventionally considered beautiful.

Matters were in this satisfactory position, though progressing too slowly for the ardent Mudge, when the recurrence of a festival, always held in high esteem in Dublin, served to precipitate the long-desired crisis.

The seventeenth of March approached, and with it St. Patrick's day, and the ball at the "Castle."

"You are going to Patrick's ball, of course," observed the lieutenant to Mrs. Bolgibbie, during one of his visits at No. 000, Blank-street. "It will not be till the twenty-fourth of April this year, in consequence of the change of Viceroy."

"Oh, yes, my relative in the Service wishes me to go, so I shall do so to oblige him; besides, our set all go, and it's a pleasant rendezvous."

Mudge was in raptures. His martial tunic looked its best at night. The sash was as good as new, and the sword-knot resplendent by gaslight. To Patrick's ball he would go in all his splendour, and at Patrick's ball he would ask Seraphina Bolgibbie to be his. Had not a bank clerk, at whose bank Mrs. Bolgibbie kept her account, confidentially, but darkly, intimated "it was all right?" Yes, the citadel should be stormed without any further delay, and Miss Bolgibbie and her income should be the spoils of war!

Lieutenant Mudge was enjoying breakfast in bed, in an apartment directly beneath the slates, shortly after he had taken this desperate resolve, when the elderly female who attended to his wants, in addition to those of the other lodgers, handed him a letter from Mrs. Clancy. A letter from his aunt—what could it mean? This was not the period for her visit to the metropolis! Hastily thrusting aside the venerable and battered tray containing the breakfast things, he tore open the envelope, and read as follows:—

"Cabbage Rose Villa, Ballymulligan, Loughrea,
"April 20th, 1874.

"DEAR NEPHEW,—I have been reading the life of Saint Patrick and I'd like to do honour to the holy man's memory by going to his ball. You can do as you like at the Castle, so could my brother when he commanded the fly-boat on the Grand Canal, so get me an invitation. I'll be up on the 23rd, as I see it's to be on the 24th. Meet me at the Broadstone, in a covered car—I don't care for cabs, I like old fashions—at five o'clock. Take the same

lodgings for me as I had before, near the Chapel in Dominick-street, and tell the girl to tell Father James I'll be wanting him in his box on Friday morning. Lay in a couple of pounds of salmon, as it's a black fast. I wouldn't trust St. Peter, let alone St. Patrick, for eggs, so I bring my own. Your affectionate aunt,

"MARY ANNE CLANCY.

"P.S. Have a fire in my-bed room and see that it's lighted early, and the sheets spread out before it. Tell the girl to have a better toasting fork, as the last one burnt my toast."

The warrior bounded from his bedstead, and uttered full-flavoured language. The Philistines were upon him. Sinbad the Sailor was troubled with the attentions of an elderly gentleman, here was a son of Mars overwhelmed by those of an elderly lady. He knew Mrs. Clancy too well to think that she could be put off, baffled, or bamboozled. He had tried that once, and her solicitor was in attendance upon her at an early subsequent date, with a view to material alterations in her will. He had promised to escort the Bolgibbies. He dare not present to these aristocratic personages a relative who pronounced inferior infayrior, and was doubtful over such words as meat and heat. What were his chances with Miss Bolgibbie if she came in contact with Mrs. Clancy? Lieutenant Mudge went back to bed, and meditated. It would be madness to lose the substance for the shadow. His aunt must be considered, i.e. her three thousand pounds in the new threes, before everything. If it had been an ordinary private entertainment, he could easily manage to put her off, and attend the festival himself, but in this case, his name and regiment would appear in print, and all the waters in the Grand Canal which had floated the bark of Mrs. Clancy's kinsman would fail to wash him clean. The case was hopeless, utterly hopeless, and the gallant Mudge sullenly submitted himself to the Inevitable.

The evening of the 23rd of April found the Lieutenant moodily awaiting the arrival of the Galway train at the Broadstone station of the M. G. W. Railway. Drawn up beside the platform stood an antique and obsolete vehicle known as a covered car, around which a critical but somewhat tattered group were gathered, engaged in discussing its peculiarities. Punctually the train arrived, bearing with it Mrs. Clancy and her baggage,

and the wretched Mudge presently greeting her as became an heir expectant, landed her safely at her lodgings. How fondly he hoped that the fatigues of the journey might prove too much for her, that some friendly draught had seized her, and that one of those rheumatic attacks, to which she was occasionally subject, was imminent! But no such luck was in store for him. Mrs. Clancy was as lively, to use her own words, as a "Boyne salmon," as she expressed a desire to attend "the Castle" before "the candles were lighted," and not to leave until they were "snuffed out." Mudge made the best excuse he could think of to the Bolgibbies, arranged an early rendezvous, and still hoping against hope, prepared for the worst.

There was a sound of revelry by night, and Dublin Castle was lighted from moat (cellar) to turret (garret), and bright twenty-candle gas shone o'er fair women, arrayed in feathers and lappets, and o'er brave men, attired in every description of uniform, from that of the bullion-breasted hussars to the thoroughly shrunken tunic of the half-pay infantry captain. But the exterior lights had other work to do, especially in the quadrangle, known as the Upper Castle Yard, for they had to illuminate the roadway for a very rickety looking horse and a still more rickety looking vehicle, from which sprang a crimson-clad warrior, to be followed after much "scrooging" and shrill ejaculations in a female voice, by the majestic form of Mrs. Clancy.

"Ye'll be back at four, Rafferty," observed Mrs. Clancy to the charioteer, "and don't let any shoneen get before ye."

"The poliss won't let me out o' me turn," said the carman, somewhat gruffly.

"Say it's for Mrs. Clancy of Loughrea, Rafferty."

"The divvle a hair they'll care," muttered the charioteer, as he moved away under the stern dictum of an energetic member of the force.

The Ringsend Fusileer was in an agony of terror lest the Bolgibbies should arrive ere he had time to deposit his aunt in some remote recess in St. Patrick's Hall, and earnestly urged that estimable lady to accelerate her movements. This appeal was somewhat necessary, as Mrs. Clancy was engaged in curtsying to and indulging in a running fire of conversation with such persons as happened to be within range. "It'll be a big ball;

I never was here before. What a splendid staircase! I came all the way from Loughrea; ain't I a courageous woman? This is my nephew, me sister's son. His father was a gauger, and died of a cruel bad attack of the horrors of drink. Five men couldn't hold him in the bed. I hear the Lady-Lieutenant isn't here. More's the pity. What regiment do you belong to, sir? is it in the horse police you are? My nephew is in the militia—the Rings-end Fusileers. This is him."

Poor Mudge! how fiercely thy heart beats beneath thy martial dinginess. What full-flavoured language is hovering about thy lips!

The grand staircase is scarlet-carpeted and ornamented with exotics. On the right stands the state porter eyeing keenly any new comer, for to him the appearance of the habitués is as familiar as that of the members of the House of Commons to the wary and vigilant doorkeeper. He knows Mudge, and Mudge's tarnished raiment, and he looks askance at Mudge's aunt. He will know her again. The staircase, in addition to the exotics, is decorated with pigeon-breasted guardsmen, gazing grimly before them from beneath the serrated fringe of their great bearskins as if on parade, and beside these waxwork-looking warriors are vice-regal retainers, in bloom-coloured suits cut after the fashion of that supplied to one Oliver Goldsmith a hundred years ago. The walls are ornamented with quaint devices cunningly constructed of warlike appliances, and wainscotted upon the present occasion by "a thin red line" of spruce-looking colour-serjeants. Mrs. Clancy's admiration recognised no limit; she apostrophised everybody and everything, and it was almost by sheer force that her nephew was enabled to drag her into St. Patrick's Hall, and to place her, much against her will, upon one of the seats in the upper tier.

"I ain't going to stick here all night, Tim," she loudly exclaimed, as he was moving away, "and if you don't like to be attentive to me there's others that will."

Mudge, mysteriously hinting that military duties commanded his attention elsewhere, vanished in the crowd in search of Miss Seraphina Bolgibbie.

St. Patrick's Ball, in full swing, is a sight never to be forgotten. The noble hall blazing with a thousand lights, and the diamonds scornfully flashing back the

glitter in a myriad sparkles; the brilliant combination of colours; the uniforms, from the vivid scarlet of the guardsman to the dark green of the rifle brigade; the quaint court dresses, and the beauty of the fair daughters of Erin, all aid in dazzling and charming the eye of the delighted spectator. The soft and sensuous music, now sparkling with the glitter of Offenbach, now wailing with the dreamy sigh of Strauss, gratifies another sense; and over and above all there is a general joyousness, and a mirth, savouring more of the revelry of the Carnival than of the cold-blooded pageantry of a court.

In accordance with a time-honoured custom, the Lord Lieutenant opens the ball with the Lady Mayoress, with a country dance, to the inspiring air of "St. Patrick's Day in the Morning." His "Ex," as he is familiarly termed, is followed by a dozen "amorous palming puppies," and their fair partners, "up and down the middle," and upon the present occasion the Viceroy was footing it away right merrily, and "humouring the tune," when a shrill female voice was heard to exclaim, "Faugh, that's no dancing. Rouse the griddle, man. Foot it. Welt the floor now, then heel and toe. Hands across. Faugh, yer a botch. I'll show ye how to dance," and Mrs. Clancy, for 't'was she, descending from her coign of vantage, made a most determined and energetic move in the direction of the viceregal set, to the intense amusement of a few, and the evident consternation of the many. At this crisis, Lieutenant Mudge, with Miss Bolgibbie upon his arm, approached the dancers, and the gallant Fusileer, being anxious to enable his fair partner to view the terpsichorean performance, pushed gently but firmly into the front rank, and succeeded in "placing" Miss Bolgibbie, in "the line."

Horror of horrors! Directly opposite to him stood Mrs. Clancy, for whom a very considerable space had been expeditiously cleared. The excellent lady was preparing to "cut in" and with a view to an effective demonstration, was engaged in pinning up her skirts in a manner that disclosed a very muddy pair of side-laced boots, of ancient pattern and formation, and a scarlet flannel vestment, which hung in graceful folds till it touched the uppers of the mediæval sandals.

"Here, you sir," she exclaimed, addressing a ferocious looking warrior, who was glaring at her over an iron-moulded

moustache, "hold me fan and gloves, and I'll show ye how we dance a country dance in the West of Ireland."

One fist was poised in air, another second and it had acted as pioneer to the rest of her frame, when with a forcible exclamation, Lieutenant Mudge sprang forward, and forcibly seizing his astonished and indignant relative by the arm, pushed her frantically into the rear.

"Tim Mudge," panted the irate Mrs. Clancy. "What do ye mean be this conduct to yer mother's only sister?"

"Are you mad, aunt?" whispered the Ringsend Fusileer.

"Are you in liquor, Tim?"

"Hush, for Heaven's sake," appealed the wretched Mudge.

Now it is a well-known fact that to ask an excited female to moderate her tone is about the rashest act of which any man can be capable.

Mudge rushed on his fate.

It impaled him.

"And how dare ye, ye twenty-one day lieutenant, ye ghost of a soldier, yer sketch of a horse-marine, presume to bid me hold me tongue?"

"Aunt!"

"Don't aunt me, sir. Ye'll find, to yer cost, I'm not yer aunt. It's to yer uncle ye'll have to go when yer next want pocket-money!"

Here Miss Bolgibbie rejoined her cavalier, who wished her—well, it doesn't matter where—and Mrs. Clancy, perceiving this interesting young female sidling up to her nephew, and confidently placing her hand upon his arm, immediately, and with true feminine instinct, turned her battery upon the new-comer.

"And who is this minx, I'd like for to know? Who is this painted dolly, with as much flour on her face as would give many a poor child its breakfast, that hugs yer as if she was yer lawful wife?"

"Come away," gasped Miss Bolgibbie, "from this mad woman. Who is she?"

"Who is she?" echoed Mrs. Clancy, derisively; "she is a lady, and that's more than you are. She has three thousand pounds in the three per cents.; that's more than all yer family, put together, ever saw. Who is she?" and here the indignant lady addressed the company generally. "She's Mary Anne Clancy, of Cabbage Rose Villa, Ballyomulligan, Loughrea; that's who she is. And now, Tim Mudge, just take me to some place of refreshment,

and leave that whey-faced crayture to go back to where she came from."

Here was a position for the Ringsend Fusileer.

The Scylla of Mrs. Clancy.

The Charybdis of Miss Bolgibbie.

If he deserted the frying-pan, it was only for the purpose of popping deliberately into the fire. Three thousand in the distance: Five hundred a year at hand, Shadow versus substance. Mrs. Clancy possessed religious tendencies of a very advanced order, and had frequently hinted that his eminence Cardinal Cullen was an extremely sensible man and a particularly good style of legatee. Miss Bolgibbie was sufficiently good-looking, and was credibly supposed to have five hundred per annum, paid quarterly.

The last consideration decided the puzzled warrior.

Taking Miss Bolgibbie's hand, and placing it upon his arm, and drawing himself up to his full height—during the execution of which manœuvre two buttons flew from the dingy tunic—he glared at his relative, and, making her a haughty obeisance, disappeared in the crowd.

Lieutenant Mudge will lead Miss Bolgibbie to the hymeneal altar upon an early date. Mrs. Clancy has not been consulted, and has had several interviews with her solicitor.

HYACINTH.

ALL of spring-time's glow and grace
Shone in that ethereal face,
Sapphire eyes, so winsome-warm,
Ariel's foot and Psyche's form;
Shower of sunny-trailing tresses,
Dancing gleams and daintinesses,
Were her sweet and special dowers.
In the time of budding flowers,
When the crocus cleft its sheaf,
And the lindens brake in leaf;
When the hyacinth's curled bells
Shook in all the dipping dells;
Came she through a clustered glade,
All in April sheen arrayed,
Under arch of bough and spray,
Whose leafage trailed, as though to stay
So sweet a wood-nymph's forward way.
She moved, she came, a pure-lipped maiden,
Her gathered skirts wild-flower laden;
Her rosy fingers wet with dew
From the wild hyacinth's cup of blue;
With cheeks too dainty, flushed, and fine
For earthly air. Not Proserpine
In flowery Enna, ere she wept,
More lovely looked, more lightly stept,
Than she whose dainty foot-step swept
The tender grass. It's crisped spires
Shook at her touch in twinkling fires
Of dew, sun-splendour'd, glory-kiet,
To rain of liquid amethyst,

Of molten ruby-drops, and spray
Brighter than the green skirts of May.
So I beheld my darling first,
My soul, with sudden love athirst,
Had braved chill death but to have prest
The hyacinth blossom at her breast.

Spring returns; its glow hath fled,
Grace remains, but decks the dead.
Sapphire eyes are veiled now
Like violets, by untimely snow.
No more that fawn-light foot shall brush
The flower-pied, dew-sprayed grass. The flush
Of rosy life no more shall light
That tender cheek so worn, so white;
Cheek that had learned for me to glow!
Coldly as snow-flake upon snow
Lip lies on lip. Mouth that erewhile
Parted in that swift arrowy smile,
Or trembled with such tender pain,
Thou shalt not smile nor shake again;
My plaints may rise, my kisses fall,
But warm thee, move thee, not at all.
Oh! spring of life, of love, of youth,
Is wintry death, in very truth
So near thee, that his shadow lies
O'er thy green swards, and glowing skies?
She shall not see the crocus break,
The lime tree bud, the lilac shake
Shower-silvered spires, the woods awake
From the long drowse of winter. She
Sleeps, while the world is wild with glee.
Those trailing tresses sweep a shroud;
My soul, with utter anguish bowed,
Envieth, that it shares her rest,
The hyacinth-blossom at her breast.

LEGENDS AND TRADITIONS OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE: PETERBOROUGH, ABBOTS
BAD AND GOOD, A CATHEDRAL WARD-
ROBE, PURITAN IMAGE-BREAKERS.

In the old times of the Heptarchy, when Northamptonshire was half forest, half fen, Peterborough went by the name of Medeshamstead, from a deep, cold pit in the river Nene, which was known as Medes Well, a pool so cold, that, even in summer, no swimmer could venture there, and yet in winter never froze. The village of Medeshamstead was also famous for a wonder-working well, consecrated to St. Lawrence, which stood near the present cathedral.

Penda, King of Mercia, founded the monastery in 655-6, laying stones for the foundation so enormous that, as the tradition goes, eight yoke of oxen could scarcely move more than one of them. Penda, betrayed to death by his wife, was succeeded by his brother Wolfere, who, after becoming a Christian, returned to heathenism, and committed many impieties. By his wife, Ermenilda, Wolfere the Fierce had two sons, Wulfade and Rufine. Wulfade, one day, pursued a goodly hart, which took refuge in a fountain near the cell of St. Chad, who, seeing

the poor creature worn and panting, in his saintly compassion, covered him over with boughs and leaves, believing him to have been sent of Heaven. Presently, up rode Prince Wulfade, hot and impatient, and inquired of the saint concerning the lost hart. The saint replied, "I am not a keeper of beasts, but of the souls of men; and you, prince, have been sent by God here to the fountain of living water as the hart is sent to the water-brook." Further religious conference then ensued between the prince and St. Chad, which ended in the two royal brothers embracing Christianity, being baptised by the zealous saint. The Christian brothers, often resorting to a private oratory to perform their devotions, were one day betrayed by Werbode, their father's steward; and King Wolfere, finding them on their knees in this place, slew them both with his own hand, and then he and his steward demolished the oratory, and left the blood-stained bodies buried in the rubbish. Shortly after this foul and unnatural murder, Werbode, the steward, was openly strangled by the Devil before the king's house, and King Wolfere, racked in conscience, repaired to St. Chad, confessed his offence, and vowed to protect the Christian religion, restore the ruined temples above alluded to, and found a great expiatory church to St. Peter, as a permanent memorial of his deep repentance. From the tears, therefore, of a penitent murderer, if the legend be but true—and who can doubt it?—sprang Peterborough Cathedral.

That St. Chad, when the penitent's prayers were over, hung his robe up on a sunbeam, those may doubt who will, and we very much question whether King Wolfere really tried to rival the saint by flinging his great hunting-gloves and bossy belt on the same frail support, yet, so the story goes. In the western cloister of Peterborough this legend of Wolfere, King of Mercia, was curiously painted on the window; and in the midst of the cloister, generally called the Laurel Yard, was a well, which tradition insisted on as the place where St. Chad hid the hart. Now, as King Wolfere really held his court at Weedon, in Northamptonshire, the old chroniclers think the cell may have been at Peterborough, though the sons were murdered at Stone, in Staffordshire, where their mother built a church in memory of their martyrdom, and where King Wolfere, when on his better behaviour,

founded a college of regular canons. Long after, says Leland, the procurator of the College of Stone went to Rome, to get the Pope to enrol the two martyrs, Wulfade and Rufine, among the saints (though the pagans had destroyed all records of their miracles), and offered to pass through a great fire with the head of Wulfade in his hand, on which the Pope remarked—"Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God;" yet, in pity at the toil the procurator had voluntarily undergone, he enrolled the two names at once in the martyrology. On their joyous way back, the procurator left the saint's head for one night at Viterbo, in the church of St. Lawrence, and, in the morning, to his horror, found that the sacred relic refused to go any further and had fixed to remain there.

It is uncertain whether penitent Wolfere was buried at Peterborough; but his brother Ethelred built the abbot's house at Peterborough, where, in the Great Hall, on three stately thrones, sat effigies of the three royal founders of Peterborough, carved, painted, and gilt, which were pulled down and broken in 1646.

Abbot Hedda reigned in an unfortunate time. The savage Danes, who plundered and burnt Croyland, gave the monks to the sword and slew the Abbot Theodorus on the very altar, also attacked Peterborough. Tulba, a brother of Earl Hulba, the leader of the Danes, being killed by a stone thrown from the tower, the assailants were so enraged that they stormed into the monastery, broke down the altars, burnt the library, tore up the charter, and finally set fire to the building. In their retreat the Danes lost in the river two waggons laden with the choicest riches. Abbot Godwin, coming, compassionately, from Croyland, collected the dead bodies of the Peterborough monks, and buried eighty-four of them in one large grave, near the east front of the monastery; he set up over his brother abbot a small pyramidal stone, engraved with pictures of the slain monks; and every year visited that place, pitching his tent over the stone, and saying mass two days for the souls of Abbot Hedda and his monks.

The monastery then lay ninety-six years in ruins, till a vision came to Athelwold, Bishop of Winchester, and bade him go to "the midland English" and repair the monastery of St. Peter. Going to Winchester to rouse King Edgar to the good work, the queen, from behind a door, heard Athelwold praying for God's help,

and at once urged her husband to help restore the monastery. When it was rebuilt, King Edgar went to see it, and, it is said, wept for joy to find that Peterborough possessed equal privileges with Rome; so he, and his nobles, and clergy, offered such large oblations, both of land, and gold, and silver, that the monastery was christened Gilden or Golden Burgh, although it soon returned to its old name. At this time, Peterborough was held to be so sacred a spot, that no person came there to pray at the shrine of St. Peter, be he abbot, bishop, lord, or even king, who did not put off his shoes at the threshold and enter barefoot. The country round was so wooded and solitary, that when Adolphus, ex-chancellor of King Edgar, was abbot, the people of the neighbouring manors and granges, having no church, came at special seasons to Peterborough to pay up their religious arrears, receive the sacrament, and hand over their church dues.

The Abbot Elsinus, a virtuoso in relics and a collector of bones on the largest scale, is especially mentioned by Hugo Candidus, a monk of Peterborough in the reign of Henry the First, in a book saved from Puritan destruction by Humfrey Austin, a chorister of the church in 1643, who bought it of one of Cromwell's soldiers for ten shillings. Swapham, a Peterborough monk, of the time of Henry the Third, has catalogued all the relics, first and foremost of which was the arm of St. Oswald, who was torn to pieces in battle by the Pagan Mercians. One day, says Bede, when Oswald, King of Northumberland, was sending meat from his dinner table to the poor and suffering at the gate of his palace, there was not enough to serve them, on which he had one of his silver plates cut to pieces and distributed among them. Bishop Aydanus, exulting at this charity, took the king's right hand and exclaimed, "Let this hand never grow old," and after death, sure enough, the beatified flesh refused to grow corrupt. But in this vast bonery in Peterborough, there were also several of King Oswald's ribs, two teeth of St. Edward, king and martyr, the shoulder blade of one of the Innocents whom Herod slew, a piece of Aaron's rod, the shoulder blade of St. Ambrose, a tooth of St. Grimbald, the head and arms of St. Rogelida, a bit of the shirt of St. Wincelaud, the finger of Abbot Leofridus, three sinews of the hand of St. Athelard, the hand of St. Magnus the Martyr, one of the five loaves which fed

the ten thousand men, a piece of our Saviour's swaddling clothes, six chips of the true cross, the head of St. George, and the tooth of St. Saxburgha. In one case the Abbot Elsinus, who scraped up his bones in all countries, made a specially lucky hit. There being a great dearth in Normandy, the abbey of St. Florentinus having expended all their treasures in food, had at last to sell the shrine of their saint, and eventually to dispose of his sacred body to Elsinus, limb by limb, all but his head, with which, in spite of Elsinus's tempting and repeated bids, they positively refused to part. In the meantime, while Elsinus was purchasing these cart-loads of honoured bones at enormous price, many of the lands of his monastery at home were wrested from the absentee, and he had on his return to buy a fourth part of Whittleseamere to make up for the loss.

The Abbot Leofridus, the next in our traditionary list, had the misfortune to rule soon after the Conquest, when Saxon abbots had to look to their doings, for Egelricus, Archbishop of York, a prisoner of the Conqueror, had been buried in chains in St. Nicholas porch, Westminster. Lucky for Leopold he died before the monastery's troubles began; but on Brand, his successor, they fell heavily, and still heavier on Thoroldus the Norman who succeeded Brand. Thoroldus provoked the indignation of that last of the Saxons, Mr. Kingsley's Hereward the Wake, who, aided by the Danes, forced Bulldyke-gate, and, unable to cut a way with his sword, set on fire the outbuildings of the monastery, and carried off all the church plate and the relics to Ely. But there the saints interposed, for during a drunken triumphal feast of the Danes, Adelwaldus, Prior of Peterborough, got together some of the plunder, and, greatest treasure of all, St. Oswald's arm, which he hid in some bed straw, and carried off. At Ramsey Abbey the prior and the fugitive monks were kindly entertained, but the arm of St. Oswald was too tempting, and that and the other relics the monks of Ramsey refused to give up till scared by the threats of Abbot Thoroldus. Yet, even with the recovered relics, the Peterborough monks were unfortunate, for in a drunken feast, in the absence of their abbot, who had gone to kill Norman soldiers and fight against Hereward, the monastery of Peterborough was burnt down.

The monks, giving the king on Thorold's death three hundred marks in silver, were

allowed to choose an abbot for themselves, and elected Godricus, a brother of Abbot Brand. That same year German, French, and Flemish thieves got into the cathedral through a broken window, and stole a cross of beaten gold, many jewels, two chalices and patins, and two golden candlesticks. The thieves were pursued and taken, but the goods passed into the king's hand and he forgot to return them to the abbey.

In the reign of John of Salisbury a judgment of heaven fell on the monastery. The story runs that a monk in a bakehouse being slow at lighting a fire, John, the abbot, being choleric, cried out, "The devil kindle it," upon which the fire flamed up to the top of the house, ran through all the abbot's offices, and thence to the tower, sparing only the chapter house, the dormitory, and the new refectory, one tower alone burning nine days together. Abbot John, whose unfortunate lapse had led to this lamentable result, began to rebuild the church, but died soon after of dropsy, a thoroughly monastic disease. A manor for the confirmation of which this abbot had given sixty marks to the king, was sold at his death to a new purchaser.

In the reign of the next abbot, Henry of Anjou, who was soon driven out, for fraud and covetousness, the legend ran that in the night time throughout Lent, in the woods between Stamford and Peterborough, black huntsmen were seen with black horns and black dogs. Some of these goblins rode on goats, were of an ugly complexion, had great staring eyes, and were seen sometimes twenty, sometimes thirty, in a company; yet nothing came of it. It is not improbable that the deer poachers could have explained these mysterious appearances.

Martinus de Vecti, or Martin of the Isle of Wight, was a great reformer of Peterborough, for he moved the village to the west side of the monastery, pulled down a castle near the church, fixed on a new place of wharfage, and removed the church of St. John the Baptist. He entertained that worthy peer, King Stephen, who came to see the arm of St. Oswald (which, by-the-by, had been probably burnt twenty-three years before in the fire already mentioned) upon which the delighted king offered his ring on the saint's altar, and generously forgave the church a debt of forty marks, which never would have been paid.

William de Waterville, a Royal chaplain, was deposed for breaking into the church with armed men and carrying off the arm

of St. Oswald, to pawn to the Jews, and wounding the monks, who tried to defend the shrines. It was this abbot who built the cathedral cloister, and founded the chapel of Thomas à Becket. Benedict, the next abbot, was beloved by Richard the First, who used to call him "father." When King Richard was seized by the Archduke Leopold, on his return to England, Benedict, faithful as ever, counselled that the chalices of all churches should be sold to pay the king's ransom, which was done. Two abbots more and we come to Robertus de Lindsey, who beautified the cathedral with thirty glass windows, where, before, only straw had been stuffed in to keep out the weather. Of Abbot Walker, in the reign of King Henry the Third, the tradition goes that he died of a broken heart, after being rebuked personally by the Pope. Johannes de Caleto, a later abbot, was chiefly remarkable for his liberality to the convent, giving daily a gallon of wine to the president of the refectory, and half a gallon to the other brothers, excepting the monk who celebrated high mass, and he had a gallon. At his death the king claimed his cup and his palfrey. Robertus de Sutton, the next abbot, was certainly not favoured by fortune. He helped the barons to fortify Northampton against the king, who, spying his banner on the wall, swore he would soon destroy the nest of so ill a bird. On the reduction of the town, Abbot Robert, however, saved himself and his abbey, by paying the offended king three hundred marks, the queen twenty pounds, Prince Edward sixty pounds, and the Lord South six pounds thirteen shillings and four-pence. The result of this was that when the king and Prince Edward were taken prisoners at the battle of Lewes, the abbot had again to buy himself off, and when Prince Edward overthrew the Earl of Leicester, at the battle of Evesham, the unhappy abbot was again gripped fast till he had paid up four thousand three hundred and twenty-three pounds eighteen shillings and five pence, for his disgraceful compromise with the barons, so it went badly with him all round. Eventually we hear that he died on his way to the Council of Lyons, and his heart was brought home in a cup, and buried before the altar of St. Oswald.

In the first year of the last of the long line of abbots, John Chambers, Cardinal Wolsey spent his Easter at Peterborough, carrying his palm himself among the

monks in the procession of Palm Sunday. On the Thursday following, the good, humble man washed and kissed the feet of fifty-nine poor people, and, having dried them, gave each person twelve pence, three ells of canvas for a shirt, a pair of shoes, and a portion of red herrings. On Easter-Day he went in procession, in his cardinal's scarlet robes, and sang the High Mass himself solemnly. And so much for the traditions of the abbots of Peterborough; for now came the Dissolution, and rough feet trod down the shrines, and greedy hands clutched at the church plate.

The inventory taken of the cathedral wardrobe is still preserved, and is very curious, marking, as it does, the splendour and wealth mediæval Peterborough must have attained. There were altar-cloths of purple velvet, embroidered with eagles and fleur-de-lis; and others of cloth of silver. Two were embroidered with leopards and stars, while another was bordered with bucks. The albs were embroidered with apples of cloth of gold and blue tissue; eight of them being adorned with crowns and moons: and six with Peter's keys. Nor were the vestments less splendid. One was of purple velvet, embroidered with flowers and angels; another was of red velvet, with ragged staves. The robes seem to have been known by special names, according to emblems embroidered on them—as the kids, the daisies, the popinjays, the squirrels. The copes, too, were numerous: there were thirteen of blue silk, being called the Georges; seven of satin of Cyprus; four of red needle-work; four of green velvet; thirteen of white silk—for there was pride and vanity even in these sacred vestments, and, no doubt, the priests wrangled over their favourite robe.

The destruction wrought by the Puritan soldiers in this fine cathedral has been recorded by tradition, and also by an eye-witness. Mr. Francis Standish, a chanter, furnished the fact to Dean Patrick, the continuer of Mr. Gunton's history of the great church. The extent of harm done to cathedrals by the fanatics during the civil wars has been so often so angrily discussed, that a calm, fair statement of their doings at Peterborough may not be uninteresting as a contribution to the subject. It appears, then, that in April, 1643, the Parliament sent forces from the associated counties to Peterborough, to besiege Croyland, a small town, seven miles distant, where there was a garrison for the king.

A foot regiment of Colonel Hubbard's arrived first, but he allowed the church doors to be all locked, and the men did no harm. Two days after, a regiment of horse, under terrible Colonel Cromwell, trotted into Peterborough, and then the mischief began, for they had no mercy. Early on the morning after they arrived, these troopers broke open the cathedral doors, and at once pulled down the two organs, trampling the pipes to pieces with their big cavalry boots. They then clattered into the choir and tore in pieces all the obnoxious Common Prayer-books; and they tore the Apocrypha out of the great folio Bible that lay on the brass eagle for the lessons. They then beat down and broke all the seats, stalls, and wainscot. There were Scripture stories, such as Moses's bush and Gideon's fleece, with Latin distiches written on each seat. While ripping and battering these, one of the soldiers found a parchment book hidden away with twenty pieces of gold. The book was Swapham's invaluable MS. chronicle. Mr. Austin, the chanter, offered ten shillings for the old Latin Bible, as he called it, and the soldier gave him the following quaint receipt and safeguard—

"I pray let this Scripture-book alone, for he hath paid me for it, and therefore I would desire you to let it alone. By me, Henry Topclyffe, soldier under Captain Cromwell, Colonel Cromwell's son; you therefore, I pray, let it alone. Henry Topclyffe."

The Puritan soldiers, however, could not be all bought off. They bent to pieces, with their halberds and muskets, the great brass chandeliers in the choir, with all its dozen and a half sockets, and also another chandelier, near the brass eagle; and the brass they hammered together, carried off, and sold, to the dismay of "the malignants," as the Royalists were called. A well-disposed person, standing near, seeing that cruel spoil and havoc, begged a Puritan, who seemed to be an officer, to restrain the soldiers from such enormities; but all he replied was—

"See how these poor people are concerned to see their idols pulled down!"

The choir being now destroyed to a mere heap of shattered lumber, Cromwell's men ran to the east end of the cathedral, and broke and cut in pieces the communion rails, threw down the table, and stole the table-cloth, and Bible, and Common Prayer, bound in velvet, a silver-gilt basin, and two pairs of silver candle-sticks; but these last Colonel Hubbert returned again.

Behind the communion table, in the cathedral, stood what was called the old altar and pinnacle screen of stone-work, painted and gilt, and reaching almost to the roof. There were no obnoxious images in it. The soldiers, however, pulled it down with ropes, and contemptuously destroyed it as a relic of Popery.

The troopers were also particularly indignant with a large oval picture on the roof of the church, of our Saviour coming to judgment, attended by the four Evangelists and the crowned saints.

"So this is the God these people bow and cringe to. This is the idol they adore," cried one, upon which Daniel Wood of Captain Roger's company, and several other soldiers loaded their muskets and fired away at it till it was destroyed, to the horror of the citizens who reported afterwards that one sacrilegious ruffian had been struck blind by a rebounding bullet, and that another had gone mad. But then, men who would baptize a horse and a mare, as they did at Saxby church, all good Cavaliers allowed were capable of anything.

The cathedral tombs next attracted these zealots. They broke down the rails of Queen Katherine of Arragon's tomb, stripped off the hearse its black velvet pall, upset the hearse, and displaced the gravestone that covered the body of that unhappy woman. There was no hearse and pall over the body of Mary Queen of Scots, but they pulled down and tore to pieces the royal arms, sword and helmet—escutcheons that hung on a pillar near the grave. In the north aisle was the stately tomb of Bishop Dove, that good white-haired old man, whom Queen Elizabeth used to call her "Dove with silver wings." The worthy bishop, stretched on a stone bed under a table of black marble, the Puritan dragoons hacked and hewed to pieces, and the same fate befell Mrs. Worm's tomb and the tomb of Prebendary Angier. In what was then called the New Building and afterwards the Library, the same zealots destroyed a splendid monument, crowded with statues, built by Sir Humphrey Orme, then living, for himself and all his family. The word altar in the following epitaph of Sir Humphry's daughter-in-law seems to have enraged the bigots—

Mistake not reader, I thee crave,
This is an altar, not a grave;
Where fire rak't up in ashes lies,
And hearts are made the sacrifice;
Her time and truth, her worth and fame,
Revive her embers to a flame.

Sir Francis himself had the pleasure of seeing his own effigy carried on a soldier's back to the market-place, troopers preceding it wrapped in torn surplices and blowing on organ pipes. Nor did the Puritans forget to rip off all the brasses in the church, particularly that of poor Abbot Williams of Ramsey, whose large marble gravestone was plated with metal. It was even reported in the town that Cromwell's soldiers had stolen the clappers of the bells, but the truth was that some of the citizens, irritated at the incessant jingling of the bells by the soldiers, had removed them by night and hid them in the roof.

Among other curiosities of the cathedral destroyed at this time were the two Paschal Pickeril windows. The legend of the windows was that the devout but ignorant artist, thinking that the Last Supper must needs be in Lent, had substituted a fish for the Paschal Lamb. In one window there was a single fish, and in the other three fishes in a dish. These famous windows were broken to pieces; but, singularly enough, a zealous churchman contrived to preserve the pane of glass with the three fishes.

In the chapter-house the soldiers ransacked the records, broke the seals, and tore all the deeds and charters to pieces, especially those which had large seals, which they mistook for Popish bulls. At last, however, a gentleman "a grave and sober person" went in and expostulated with the men. He told them he knew the writings were not Popish bulls, but the evidences of estates, the destruction of which would undo many. In this way some of the records were snatched from the fire, and preserved to the cathedral.

It was during these two or three days of pillage and destruction that Cromwell himself (so the tradition goes), had a narrow escape from what the Cavaliers would have considered a retributive death. He was quartered at the house of Mr. Arvington, called the vineyard, at the east end of the cathedral. Out of the court of this house there was a passage into the churchyard ascended by three or four stone steps. Cromwell was riding up these steps when his horse fell under him, and rising under the door, dashed his rider's head against the lintel, so that Cromwell fell to the ground as if dead. It was about a fortnight before he recovered, and a Cavalier writer says, exultingly, "there were eye-witnesses who affirmed that the blow left splinters in his scalp near a

finger's length." It was a rumour of the day that during the window breaking in the cathedral, Cromwell, espying a little crucifix "in a window aloft," got a ladder and broke it out zealously with his own hand. Yet Gunton distinctly tells us that Cromwell was blamed, not for acting, but for not restraining the soldiers in their outrages.

During the time the cathedral doors lay open, and the ruin was open to all comers, two singular accidents happened.

The first was this. Two young children, not more than five years old, got up into the steeple, and, losing their way, came to the place where the great bells hung. It was Sunday afternoon at sermon-time; and the children, seeing the round passage left for drawing up the bells, forty yards from the ground, one of them proposed to jump down. "No," says the other; "let us swarm down this rope," the rope hanging down to the clock-case below. Down they went swift as arrows, and at the clock-house they were thrown off and remained as dead. The news reaching the parish church that two children had fallen from the Minster, and were killed, the service was suspended for a time, every parent fearing for his or her own child. The children, however, were only stunned by this dangerous fall, and soon recovered. In the other case, a scholar of the free school, son of a Puritan officer, got on the top of the cathedral, to look for jackdaws' nests, and, going over the roof of the body of the church, trod on a rotten board, and fell down into the organ-loft. He was picked up dead, "his pockets filled," says the grave chronicler, "with those inauspicious birds."

The Puritans did not end their plundering with the departure of Cromwell's men. They were as greedy as Henry the Eighth, and they pulled down and sold the cloisters, the old chapter-house, the library, and the bishop's hall and chapel. The lead of the bishop's hall was sold; but the ship that conveyed the sacrilegious cargo sank on her way to Holland, and the Cavalier clergy cried out, "a special judgment."

The cathedral continued in ruins till Oliver St. John, on his return from an embassy to Holland, obtained a grant of the dilapidated minster, and graciously gave it to the town of Peterborough to use as a parochial church. Mr. Samuel Wilson, a schoolmaster of

Charterhouse, was sent down to be preacher, with a salary of a hundred and twenty pounds a year. In 1660, Dr. Cosin, the ancient dean of Peterborough, returned, after twenty years' exile in France, restored decorous order in the cathedral, and revived the old services of the Church of England.

A GALE AT THE LAND'S-END.

NEVER did gale spring up more suddenly than that on Monday, the 13th of last April. When we went to bed the night before, there was hardly a breath of wind; when we woke, it was blowing very great guns indeed, while, every now and then, came a burst of rain. How about our intended trip to Land's-End? Our visitor, the Buckinghamshire rector, would not be able to see the place at all, if we put it off; and yet, during breakfast, the sky got so much more leaden, and the fitful rain seemed so determined to come down steadily, that, after much discussion, the carriage was countermanded.

Fortunately, our message was misunderstood; and, when John drove round, towards mid-day, during a temporary lull, we hastily got in, a merry party of five; our merriment being none the less because the wind across Sennen Green seemed likely to overturn the whole concern.

I have seen the Land's End many times. I know by heart all the little *zawns* (chasms), up which, even in a calm, the waves wash in restlessly. If I were a painter I could render, better, I think, even than Turner has done, the peculiar character of the rock—built up, as it were, slab above slab, with here and there what might well be the jamb of some enormous gateway. No one who studies the rocks hereabouts can wonder at the tales of ruined cities, hill altars, rock basins, and logans poised by the hand of man. It all seems architectural. There, under Maen Castle, along the face of the cliff, you fancy you can trace the courses of masonry; one course really seems arched—the very key-stone stands in its place, and all about it the reddish-brown rock shows, as it were, the trace of fire. You dream of a pre-historic capital of Lyonesse, of which the eastern extremity may somehow have escaped submersion. Of course it is all a dream. I could show you rock basins, more perfect than any which tradition has connected with the Druids, now actually in process of formation, as the drip from

some neighbouring crag inevitably falls into them. I could show you rocks which will soon become logans—"rocking-stones," when a little more of their soft base is worn away. And as for Cyclopean walls, granite columns, and portals like those at Mycenæ, you get them not here only, but anywhere between this and Porthcurnow. The giant builders must have spread their work over at least seven miles of coast. And these seven miles are just the very finest in England, not on account of the height, nor even the steepness of the cliffs, but because of this which I have called their architectural character.

To-day, however, we rather look to seaward, and watch the huge rollers, foam-crested, coming on as though the "armed knight" and all the other outlying bastions must go down before them. Though the sky is all leaden, there is plenty of colour. Round the Longships is a weltering mass of bright white surf, now and then throwing up a huge column which rises high enough almost to overtop the tall new lighthouse. Whiter still is the crest of every wave; and as for the waves, no one would believe us if we put down all their shades of green and blue and violet. Where can that flash of deep bright emerald, that startles you every now and then, come from? Can it have caught a ray of sunlight which has shot unobserved through the gloom, or has it brought that intense colour from some tropical water where there is sunshine even to-day?

But, before we go to the so-called Land's-End, we all agree to try Parden-nick Point, the point which Turner loved, and which so well deserves its name ("the herd of rocks," as if the giant's huge cattle had been turned into stone). It is higher than the Land's-End and finer; so we start boldly, three parsons and two parsons' wives, bent on the picturesque, at all costs. But the wind is strong over the moor, and the dashes of rain are blinding; and very soon one wife and one parson succumb, and, nestling "in the lewth" of a great boulder, gather courage to return to the inn.

The others push on, and are rewarded. Parden-nick itself, indeed, does not come out so well as in the calm, for one cannot scramble to the edge and take in the rocky chaos from the best points of view. Still the sight is a glorious one, when, in a lull between the gusts, you can for a brief moment enjoy it. Every wave

makes a clean breach over the Armed Knight, and then comes rushing against Enis Dodnan ("earth-covered islet") and pouring through the tunnel that pierces it.

We try to see who was right, the Romans, with their *fluctus decumanus*, or the Greeks, with their *trikumia*, third wave; and, at last, agree that the *three* does not mean every third wave, nor has it merely an intensifying force; but it accurately describes the groups of three vast billows, each followed by seven or eight smaller ones. "But," says the more heroic of the two parsonesses, "we should judge of the height of the waves so much better, if we were down below." So we push on to Nanjizel, where there is a pathway down, and where the Scilly cable is carried along the central chine of cliff which divides the little bay. Nanjizel is calm, by comparison: the waves are tumbling in, churning up the sand; but they are no longer the furious rollers of the other side. They have done their work, and have got to their playground; and one can't help thinking how jolly it would be to go down and have a game with them. However, the path is steep and miry, there are no very high waves to measure; so we content ourselves with looking southward, towards Tol Pedn and the Logan, and watching how headland after headland disappears and then comes out again as each coursing wave hides it behind a veil of spray and then passes on. Before us is Pendour, with the white boulders of its "raised beach." You think a single wall of cliff stretches thence to the great crags of Tol Pedn; but, see, a wave has got behind it, and showers of spray, rising almost to the line of the fields a-top, prove that the cliff nearest to you is a mere outwork.

Somebody talks of the "runnel-stone;" but of what use is its bell, the sound of which comes so sweetly over the summer water, now that the thud of the wave against the nearest cliff can scarcely be heard for the shrieking of the wind, while, if you want to shout anything into your companion's ear, you have first to draw him well under the lee of a rock?

More splashes of rain; yet the waves are almost as green as if it were bright sunlight. Come away; if we stay longer, we shall all turn heathen and preach about "old Triton blowing his wreathed horn," and of "catching sight of Proteus rising from the sea." It is such a joy of waters, that one can scarcely help be-

lieving it is a joy of sea-gods as well. The gulls however (antitypes of the Harpies) don't like it. They are not here; we saw them, as we came along, settled by scores on the ploughed land. No living thing, except here and there a cormorant. Yet surely there must be life and intelligence that we know not of to enjoy all this wild loveliness. Back we go, keeping nearer to the sea, our courage having grown, or, perhaps, our feet being steadier through use. Just under one beetling crag we find a delightful place whence we can quietly look down on the shapes of Pardennick rocks: some like magnified Egyptian statues; others, like the lines of elephants which are carved at the mouths of Indian cave-temples. The very colour of the rock, warm in spite of the want of sun, is a delight to one who is condemned to the black clay-slate of Cape Cornwall. Without "botanising," (rather out of place on such a day) we have leisure to notice the squills, and the young thrift, and the samphire, and the fat-leaved sea-spinach, and, above all, the furze, with its masses of gold, out of which still rise the dead shoots killed by last winter's salt winds. There is no heather yet, but we have colour enough without it.

What a change from the quiet of Nanjizel to the next little zawn, up which the wind howls as through a funnel. You can't stand against it; fortunately, the rough granite gives a good foothold, and the stones, bearded with grey moss, are full of crannies for your fingers. What a sight below! One mass of solid white, as if the whole zawn was full of whipped cream, out of which a lump is heaved up every now and then and whirled through the funnel, breaking and rushing past you like a flight of white birds. On the north side of Pardennick is a still grander sight: "the Maid's Pool," so called from a lone rock standing, pillar-like, on the shore, is seething away like a huge cauldron. You literally have to lay your head on the rock behind which you are sheltering, pull your felt-hat well down, and look as stealthily as if, instead of blinding spray, that hurts like little pebbles, you were in fear of the shots of hostile marksmen. When you do catch a glimpse, it is wonderful—something to be dreamt of.

But we must hurry back; the recreants will be growing hungry. So we push on apace, stumbling over the tussocks, and every now and then pausing for one more good look at the glorious sight to sea-

ward. There is a man creeping round the cliff. I go up to him, and find he is an unpicturesque descendant of the wreckers on the look-out for anything that may be cast ashore. He tells me this nearest zawn is called "Red Works," a place where those ubiquitous "old men" (Phœnicians or Jews or Aborigines?) once streamed for tin.

How hastily we lunched; how eager we were to get to the real Land's-End, and how, when we got there, we voted Turner wrong, and Pardennick a mistake, and found the very finest seas bursting over Pedn Maen Dhu (Penmandhu, black rock-head—compare the Welsh Penman-mawr), just to the north, and how the "Irish Lady" was seldom to be seen amid the sheets of foam, there is no need to tell. The whirl of the waves through the channel that separates the Pele (spire) from the last point of the mainland, was simply tremendous. No one thought of being afraid, so grand were the surroundings; one of us even "threaded the needle," passed round and between the twin rocks which stand on the very verge, and all of us went where some would scarcely have ventured in calm weather. It was altogether a new feeling. "I've seen many a good sea off the Mumbles," said the more adventurous parsoness, "but nothing a bit like this." As the day wore on, the sea got even wilder. To lose the Longships lighthouse at every third wave became almost a matter of course. All Whitsand Bay seemed filled with yeasty water. Cape Cornwall backed up by the cliffs of Kenidjack Castle, was looming grandly to the north-east; and it was not till dusk that we could make up our minds to turn homewards. A wild drive it was. How desolate Sennen church-town looked! how needless the multitude of stone hedges, six to one little cottage, chiefly useful for growing furze and foxgloves; and how the middens, kitchen and other, came into unpleasant prominence. But here is Chapel Cairn Brea, our alp, rising out of the level, well-pared moor, cut so bare for fuel that only here and there a furze or heather root is left; one more glimpse of the sea, just where, by Cape Cornwall, the waves are making a clean breach over the "Brisons," (briser) and, then, good-bye for to-day to the grand doings of him so well named by old Æschylus "Zephyr the giant," a very different being from the oft-blowing west wind, the Favonius—kindly breeze—of the Latin poets.

It must have been a grand gale. The news from Scilly is that the lighthouse on the Bishop's Rock was shaken out of its place, but happily fell back into it again; and, though the sea round it is seven fathoms deep, sand was mixed with the water which broke several of the lighthouse windows. Inland, too, from Whitsand Bay, fish of deep-sea varieties, wrass and others, were found five hundred yards and more from high-water mark. The new Longships lighthouse, too, was only just built in time. A good piece of the rock on which the former building stood, long undermined, got its finishing stroke in this wild gale, and quietly gave way not long after. What a day it must have been on the "Wolf," that lone rock, half-way over to Scilly, on which there is often no landing for months together! A lighthouse-man's must be a strange life at the best of times. Think of him who, when light-keepers used to be only two together, was left for weeks beside the dead body of his comrade, unable to remove it from their common living room, while the weather was so bad that no boat could put off in answer to his signals. I always think, when I see a lighthouse, of those rocky islets off the coast of Clare and Galway, with their "beehive huts," some of them still called "the rock of the starving bishop;" and of the passage in the old Brehon code which enacts that when a church dignitary has done wrong, he shall betake himself to one of them for voluntary exile. Are light-keepers the kind of men, lay or cleric, who choose such a sort of La Trappe for a like reason? You may fancy so, my imaginative young friend; and you may liken the helpful light, which they tend night after night, to the ray amid the darkness which, not seldom, as from a smaller Iona, gleamed usefully forth from the rock of some "starving bishop." Keep your fancy; it is pretty and harmless. But in real life you'll find the light-keeper a very prosaic person. They often come and live hereabouts when they've retired; and are well-behaved, pleasant-faced old men, fond of basking in the sun, fond of spinning dull yarns, not despising grog and tobacco, though by no means over-addicted to those "wanities." But, as for romance, I never knew men with less of it. Not to expiate secret sins, but to earn a comfortable pension did they take to lighthouse work. What shall we say then? Do scenery and surroundings tell on the

human mind? They do in the long run, on the race; they chiefly make one race differ from another; but certainly not in a life-time. Even the "Wolf" light-keeper will come out as he went in, no more and no less touched with the feeling of the sublime; although through long winter months the billows have been howling round him, as loudly as they were meant to have howled through that big copper wolf that was once ineffectually pegged down on the rock as a warning to sailors; while every night the contrast between the dark heaving sea beyond, and the circle of which he was the centre—a circle of intense brightness from that wonderful light, has been, in thought, something awful. In thought, but not in practice. He soon got used to it; and it is best so, for a romantic light-keeper might forget to trim his wick, or to properly clean his reflectors, or something. On the whole, the prosaic man answers best. But even he must have felt as he had seldom felt before, during that memorable gale on the 13th April, 1874.

SAFELY MARRIED.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "AN EXPERIENCE," "DAISY'S TRIALS," &c., &c.

BOOK II. CHAPTER VI.

DURING the next few months, I saw Elsie and her husband pretty often, without seeing much of them. In their drives and rides they constantly passed my cottage, and never without stopping to speak to me. Often I was in the garden, and then it was just a few words at the gate, perhaps, and no more.

They were (should I rather say he was?) most studiously thoughtful of me. They brought me books from the town, they undertook all my fidgetty little commissions (I am sure it was Allan who had the trouble of these). They inundated me with luxuries from Braithwait—flowers, fruit, fish, game, poultry. I could use them for my sick neighbours if I did not care for them myself, Mr. Braithwait always said, in answer to any remonstrance at his prodigality.

Now and then, but, perhaps, not more than three times during those first three months, I saw Edgar Ramsay with them. Gay, careless, handsome, his fair, smooth, sunny, apparently open face, made my poor Allan's—he never being in his best mood when with his cousin—look dark and sour, almost forbidding.

I was standing under my favourite beech tree, in my garden, one fair September afternoon—With those words comes to me, in a special manner, the memory of the beauty of that afternoon. We had already had light frost at night, enough to make the leaves begin to change, and to fall, and enough to cause that first pungent scent of autumn to mingle with, and to tinge with pathos, the sweetness of my late-blowing roses and my mignonette. The sights, and sounds, and scents of such an afternoon, made a special appeal to me. It was at this time of the year, the early autumn, that had begun the brief summer of my life. And, old woman as I am, the autumn cawing of rooks circling homewards, across a sky colouring towards sunset, to nests beginning to be revealed by the thinning of the russet-glories of beechwoods, which to the last redden richly in response to the late gleam, can make sweet, sad, soul-wrung tears, as from "the depths of some divine despair, rise to my heart, and gather to my eyes:" can make me feel, though, perhaps, as if through a glass and darkly, the vague tremors of new-born self-mistrusting hope, the sadness and the gladness, the pain, the pathos, the pity, the glow and the glory, the doubt, the darkness, the despair of that keen life, and quick death, of my youth and my love. Can make me, living over these again, feel young enough to suffer again, till something, a twinge of rheumatism, a glance in a mirror, or some such accident, brings to my consciousness again my red face, set off by its white cap-borders, my nut-cracker nose and chin, my general Mother-Hubbard-like appearance, and I laugh grimly to myself, at myself!

Is one most sad, or most glad, to be recalled to the knowledge that these things are past and gone, dead and done-with, as far as anything spiritual ever is past and gone, dead and done-with? To the knowledge that the battle of life is almost over, and the end of life—so far as it ever has end—near? I am not glad to feel the end near. I never remember to have wished for death. Is this that I have never suffered as some suffer? And yet, what with hate and love, and jealousy and loss, and pride and pity, I suffered pretty nigh to the uttermost. Is it that I have not the Faith some are blessed with? Or is it merely that I have so keen a vitality? Is it that I am of the earth, earthy? Or is it that I am strong, mind and body, and that it takes much to weary me of living?

I have friends who are shocked at the liveliness, which they call worldliness, of so old a woman; who would think more and better of me, if they always found me sitting still, with my open Bible before me, and taking little or no interest in the joys and sorrows around me, treating the world, in fact, as a thing with which, having done on my own account, I had no concern for the sake of others. Well, I will not dogmatise, will not lay down rules for other people; but may just say, that in me such conduct would not mean growth of saintliness, but of selfishness and of stupidity, the beginning not of new life, but of living death.

I trust I am not in this more a heathen than a Christian, though such friends as those of whom I spoke have reproached me with my admiring study of one who, condemned to death for the nobleness of his life, said, in farewell to his friends—"The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways. I to die, and you to live. Which is better, God only knows."

What has led to all this wandering? My eyes had fastened themselves on the beech tree, under which I was standing on the afternoon of which I began to speak. A beech tree which grows opposite my own particular windows, on the smoothest bit of lawn, in the best-beloved part of my garden, with the marking of whose trunk, the weather stains, the delicate velvetings of lichen, the tracery left by torn-off ivy, I am so familiar, that they are as vividly real to me when I look towards it in the dark as when I see it standing stately in moonlight or in sunlight.

That tree seems to stand in the very centre of all my life, and the sight of it is always apt to send me back over my life. My cottage is the only home I have ever known. My mother came to it on her marriage; my father was first curate then rector of Braithwait parish. He died very young; but, after his death, the real old Braithwait church was restored and a rectory built close to it. My mother lived on in this cottage; lived on in it a quarter of a century after my father's death. The period of my life in it now exceeds three-quarters of a century.

Well, as I began by saying, it was under this beech-tree that I was standing one fair September afternoon when the clatter of hoofs in the road made me go down to my garden-gate to see Elfie and her husband, as I expected, go by. There was no husband in the case, however, only Elfie and Edgar Ramsay.

By the time I got to the gate they had reached it and were waiting there in a golden glory of dusky sunbeams. That gate fronts the west, and the sun was already low. I saw them before they saw me. Young Ramsay's hand was resting on the pommel of Elfie's saddle, and he was leaning forward to look up into her face with laughing audacity. As answer, presumably, to that audacity, Elfie brought her whip down upon his fingers—in fun, I suppose, for she laughed, one of her silvery-ringing peals of Elfin laughter, as she did it; in fun, I suppose, but more sharply than was pleasant fun to Mr. Ramsay, as I could see, for there was an angry heat in his eyes, as, catching sight of my approach, he drew off from Elfie.

I didn't like what I had seen, and my greeting to Elfie was the very sharply spoken question, "Where's your husband?"

"At home," was all Elfie's answer.

"How's that?"

"Business detained him. He couldn't give up his business, and I couldn't, on such an afternoon, give up my ride. So, here we are, for once, without him." She spoke gaily enough, and her mouth smiled gaily enough, and yet, as, shading my eyes with my hand, I peered up into her lovely face, I took it into my head that there was a new expression in it, a look of unsettled trouble.

To Mr. Ramsay's profound salute and fascinating smile, I had only responded by a nod.

"I'm thinking of spending a day with you, soon, Elfie, before the days get any shorter," I said. "When can I be sure of finding you at home?" I had not had any such thought till something I fancied I saw in the girl's face raised my curious interest.

"Any day, Aunt Hammond."

"Any day is no day, Elfie, and if I put my old self, my old man, and my old pony to the trouble of getting to the House, I don't want to run the risk of finding the house empty. Shall you be at home to-morrow, child?"

"To-morrow is the archery-meeting at my sister's," prompted Mr. Ramsay.

"The next day, then?" I asked, keeping my eyes on Elfie, as if she had spoken.

"The next day, Thursday, is the day of the flower-show at Castle Howard," again prompted Edgar Ramsay.

"Friday?" I questioned, still, of course, of Elfie.

"Mrs. Braithwait, I happen to know,

promised to go into York with my cousin on Friday. You remember," he added, turning to Elfie, "Allan asked you to call with him on his old friends, the Wybarts; he might not be pleased if you engaged yourself for that day, even to—"

"I remember all about it," Elfie interrupted, sharply—I liked that sharpness—just as I, out of patience, burst out—

"Is that young man the keeper of your conscience as well as of your engagement-list, Mrs. Braithwait?"

"An office he might be equal to, as, according to some people, it would be a sinecure," she answered quickly. Then she added, with a gentler face and voice—

"Come on Saturday, dear auntie, now do, and stay till Monday. You like the little old Braithwait church, and you know you like Mr. Marchmont's services. Promise me!"

"You should warn Miss Hammond that your house will be somewhat full. She might prefer to visit you when you are alone." Again the irrepressible Mephistopheles.

"I had forgotten," Elfie said, and her face clouded over. "You see, while the fine weather lasts, I have so many engagements. My husband likes me to be gay and to amuse myself. He is so anxious I should not find Braithwait dull. Let me send the carriage for you, auntie, on the first free day, may I?"

"Don't forget it then, my dear, and don't put it off too long. Remember how, probably, at my age, things postponed may be indeed postponed—ad infinitum."

She stooped and kissed me, and said, "I'm sure I want to see you as much as you want to see me," and then off they rode.

I stood looking after them.

The lane was full of stillest sunniest shine; its hedge-row glories showed motionless against a sky of stainless blue. From the tall trees just now and then a golden or a russet leaf came floating down, detached by some bird's stirring in the branches. The rooks were cawing with a softened dreamy sort of caw. With that stillest sunshine and glory, that immaculate purity of earth, and air, and sky, that pathos which was the crowning touch upon it all, no two figures could have

seemed to me more incompatible than those I watched.

Yet one could not well have found a lovelier lady or a finer cavalier.

Riding was one of Elfie's pet pleasures and natural accomplishments. She had had no lessons, save as a tiny child from my old Nicholas, but she sat her horse always with a lightly-poised grace and safety, as a fairy princess would sit her enchanted charger. As I looked after them I noticed, for the first time, that Elfie's hair was streaming loose upon the wind.

In itself a trifle, this seemed to me a seriously bad sign.

I was foolish enough to run out into the lane and call after them. Of course, they could not hear me. I made myself hot and breathless for nothing. Without looking round, they rode on and on, turned the corner, and were out of sight.

Why did I vex myself about the order or disorder of Elfie's hair?

Allan, I knew, most decidedly objected to his wife's riding about with all that bright silken wealth loose about her; while I had once heard Edgar say, that Elfie never looked so lovely as thus.

My annoyance did not quite reach its height, however, till they passed my cottage again on their homeward way, later than I thought seemly, and I found they had been into the neighbouring market-town. To have gone into York itself would have been less objectionable; they would not there have furnished so much food for gossip.

I caught a severe cold that afternoon. I had heated myself, and then I stayed out after dewfall. I was, also, both vexed and depressed; and in such moods evil physical influences take, I think, more hold of us.

I had acute bronchitis, and was, more or less, laid up for a month, keeping my bed entirely for a couple of weeks.

Directly I was well enough to go out—I am a tough old body, and throw off illness more quickly than most people—I had my old pony put into my old chaise, my old man into his old driving-coat, and went over to Braithwait.

I was both vaguely and deeply uneasy about things there. I had seen nothing of either Elfie or her husband, nor heard anything for all that long sick month.